

# Relieving Pressure

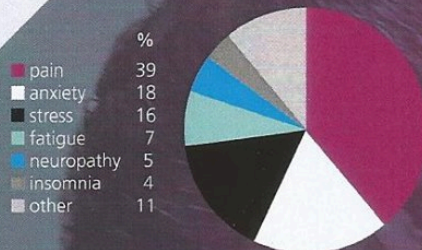
## An Evaluation of Shiatsu Treatments for Cancer and Palliative Care Patients in an NHS Setting

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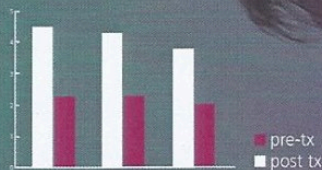
### Background

The study investigated the effectiveness of Shiatsu therapy in relation to the management of health and well-being concerns of cancer and palliative care patients in an out-patient clinic.

Reasons for concern  
Based upon concern 1 in MYCaW questionnaire



Mean improvement



Improvement	2.3	2.1	1.8
95% C.I	(1.9, 2.8)	(1.4, 2.7)	(1.3, 2.2)
p-value	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001

'Treatments really helped with oedema, which was quite limiting. Pain relief has also been very effective. The quality of my life has improved.'

'It is a relief to be heard and be able to open up. Treatments decreased my pain and increased my inner strength.'

'The treatments have helped me to sleep and to feel more confident. I feel a sense of increased wellbeing at the end of treatments'

### Method

Patients are referred to the service for symptom management, particularly stress and anxiety, but also other symptoms such as nausea or insomnia. Data was collected following use of the Measure Yourself Concerns and Wellbeing (MYCaW) questionnaire, which was designed for evaluating supportive care interventions.

### Results

Mean changes in post-intervention MYCaW scores were highly significant ( $p < 0.001$ ), demonstrating considerable improvements in both presenting symptoms and perceptions of wellbeing. Based on a significance level of 0.05, both the Wilcoxon signed-ranks test and the two-tailed t-test indicated that post-treatment ranks and means were statistically significantly lower than pre-treatment ranks and means in the three categories.

### Discussion

Anxiety, stress management and pain scores were the most improved. Wellbeing scores also improved, on average, by two points on the Likert scale. Patients have stated that 'being listened to' and 'being heard' were important factors when describing how Shiatsu had helped.

Compassionate listening also allows the practitioner to create comprehensive holistic treatment plans which evolve as the needs of the patient changes over time. Other patient comments included improvements in quality of life, the importance of developing self-help strategies such as breathing exercises and a deep reconnection with the body.

### Conclusion

We suggest that a study using larger numbers is necessary in order to provide more robust evidence rather than emerging trends. In view of the results, we consider Shiatsu to be a relatively safe and effective therapy in cancer and palliative care settings.

